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REVIEWS OF BOOKS

GENERAL BOOKS AND BOOKS OF ANCIENT HISTORY

How the World Votes: the Story of Democratic Development in Elections. In two volumes. By CHARLES SEYMOUR, Professor of History in Yale University, and DONALD PAIGE FRARY, Instructor in History in Yale College. (Springfield, Mass.: C. A. Nichols Company. 1918. Pp. xiii, 406; xi, 355. \$6.50.)

THIS is a praiseworthy and successful attempt to present in a single work the history and the present development of electoral systems, the world over. The first volume opens with a discussion of the several theories of the suffrage from the most ancient times, followed by a sketch of the crude systems of semi-popular government in the Middle Ages. The origin and development of parliamentary government in England down to and including the Reform Act of 1918; the extension of it to the colonies; the adaptations and modifications of English methods in the American colonies, leading up to a full consideration of the present electoral systems in the United States; and the history of suffrage in France, complete the volume.

The second volume takes up the systems of Germany, Austria, Hungary, Italy, Russia, Scandinavia, Switzerland, Spain, the Balkans, Turkey, South America, and Japan. It is partly historical, with a mass of detailed information showing to what extent the people in those countries rule and the machinery employed to enable them to express their will.

The result is a comprehensive and most useful book of reference, compact, well-written, and covering the subject in a satisfactory manner. By far the largest part of the work is information simply, which has been drawn from various sources and compiled with great industry. The ordinary reader will find matter of interest in many descriptions of systems of voting quite unlike anything known in this country—the plural votes in Belgium (discarded in the new constitution); the indirect elections in Germany under the Empire; proportional representation in Denmark. Those who were puzzled to understand by what device each electoral district in Germany, choosing seven to a dozen members, distributed its choice between five or six parties, when electing members of the congress at Weimar, will find the answer in the lucid explanation of the manner in which the result of *scrutin de liste* is worked out (I. 385). It is there described to illustrate an election in France, where the system has been several times adopted and abandoned. It has just, April, 1919, been reintroduced in that country. It was originally, the present writer believes, an invention of the Swiss.

In treating of elections and voting in the United States the authors have deviated from their general plan, and have entered the field of politics—not, however, partizan politics. They take pains, for example, to give what seem to them to be reasons for regarding the direct primary as a great improvement on the convention, not only in theory but in result, on which there is room for wide divergence of opinion. Their argument includes a fancy sketch of the proceedings of a nominating convention absolutely dominated by a boss. No doubt there were many such conventions, but they were not typical of all, and the generalization is misleading. Moreover there are serious defects in the present primary system that are not mentioned. Under it many a weak or objectionable candidate has slipped through by a narrow plurality, when there were many competitors for the nomination, who would have been eliminated after the first ballot in a convention requiring a majority to effect a nomination.

In one or two other passages the authors have introduced their personal opinions on controverted points in American practice, which seem out of place in a work which is otherwise one of information and not of political propaganda. There is a statement on page 286, volume I., about a former mayor of Boston that should be amended. Between the offense and its punishment and his election as mayor there was a long interval during which he was both an alderman and a congressman.

EDWARD STANWOOD.

Folk-Lore in the Old Testament: Studies in Comparative Religion, Legend, and Law. In three volumes. By Sir JAMES GEORGE FRAZER, Fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge. (New York and London: Macmillan Company. 1918. Pp. xxv, 569; xxi, 571; xviii, 566. \$15.00.)

SOME one said of the great Arabic scholar, the late Professor De Goeje of Leyden, that he published as much as an entire academy. Sir James George Frazer's productivity is even more remarkable, and it might be said that he has written an entire library. His *magnum opus*, *The Golden Bough*, growing from two volumes in the first edition to twelve volumes in the third with an additional index volume, is the most extensive collection of illustrations of popular customs, beliefs, and rites in all parts of the world, primitive, ancient, and modern, that has ever been gathered together by any scholar or by any group of scholars. The book marked a new era in the comparative study of religious beliefs and practices. The production of such a work alone would have consumed the entire career of an ordinary scholar; but Sir James Frazer is of the extraordinary type, and so we have in addition from his pen a four-volume work on totemism and exogamy, a six-volume edition of Pausanias with elaborate and most constructive notes, a volume on *The Early History of Kingship*, another on *The Belief in Immortality*